



News From Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis 32nd Congressional District of California

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HOUSE COMMITTEE PASSES SOLIS' AMENDMENT TO MAKE POLLUTERS PAY

WASHINGTON, D.C.- Last night, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed an amendment offered by Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (CA-32), Ranking Democratic Member of the Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, to reinstate the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to make polluters pay for their share of the cost of cleanup. The Republican Majority agreed to accept Solis' amendment during consideration of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

"I am pleased the committee recognizes the importance of EPA's authority and ability to seek recovery of government money spent cleaning up polluters' mess. This agreement protects our small businesses and ensures that taxpayers aren't left holding the tab for those polluters who can afford to clean up their own mess," Solis said.

On a 39-16 vote, the House Energy and Commerce Committee late Wednesday night passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

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The Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund was created by Congress in 1986 and is financed by a 0.1 cent a gallon tax on motor fuels. The LUST Trust Fund was specifically created to address contamination from leaking underground storage tanks at gas stations and other facilities, which are often the source of MTBE and petroleum contamination in groundwater.

According to EPA, MTBE contamination can increase cleanup costs by 25 percent to more than 100 percent. EPA's FY2006 Annual Performance Plan and Congressional Justification indicate that "states face multi-million dollar cleanup costs at sites with widespread MTBE contamination such as Santa Monica, CA, Long Island, NY, Pascoag, RI, and Hopkins, SC."

the polluters cash in, which is exactly what the language in the energy bill does."